

Anne Bradstreet (ca. 1612-1672)

Verses upon the Burning of our House, July 18th, 1666

In silent night when rest I took,
For sorrow near I did not look,
Iwaken'd was with thund'ring noise
And piteous shrieks of dreadful voice.
That fearful sound of "fire" and "fire,"
Let no man know is my Desire.

I starting up, the light did spy,
And to my God my heart did cry
To straighten me in my Distress
And not to leave me succourless.
Then coming out, behold a space
The flame consume my dwelling place.

And when I could no longer look,
I blest his grace that gave and took,
That laid my goods now in the dust.
Yea, so it was, and so 'twas just.
It was his own; it was not mine.
Far be it that I should repine,
He might of all justly bereft
But yet sufficient for us left.

When by the Ruins oft I past
My sorrowing eyes aside did cast
And here and there the places spy
Where oft I sate and long did lie.

Here stood that Trunk, and there that
chest,
There lay that store I counted best,
My pleasant things in ashes lie
And them behold no more shall I.

Under the roof no guest shall sit,
Nor at thy Table eat a bit.
No pleasant talk shall 'ere be told
Nor things recounted done of old.

Anne Bradstreet (ca. 1612-1672)

Verses upon the Burning of our House, July 18th, 1666

No Candle 'ere shall shine in Thee,
Nor bridegroom's voice ere heard shall
bee.

In silence ever shalt thou lie.
Adieu, Adieu, All's Vanity.

Then straight I 'gin my heart to chide:
And did thy wealth on earth abide,
Didst fix thy hope on mouldring dust,
The arm of flesh didst make thy trust?

Raise up thy thoughts above the sky
That dunghill mists away may fly.
Thou hast a house on high erect
Fram'd by that mighty Architect,
With glory richly furnished
Stands permanent, though this be fled.

It's purchased and paid for too
By him who hath enough to do.
A price so vast as is unknown,
Yet by his gift is made thine own.

There's wealth enough; I need no more.
Farewell, my pelf; farewell, my store.
The world no longer let me love;
My hope and Treasure lies above.

Notes

pelf: wealth.